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PROVISIONAL VERBATIM RECORD OF THE THREE THOUSAND
TWO HUNDRED AND SIXTY-THIRD MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Tuesday, 10 August 1993, at 4.30 p.m.

President:	Mrs. ALBRIGHT	(United States of America)
Members:	Brazil	Mr. SARDENBERG
	Cape Verde	Mr. JESUS
	China	Mr. LI Zhaoxing
	Djibouti	Mr. OLHAYE
	France	Mr. MERIMEE
	Hungary	Mr. MOLNAR
	Japan	Mr. HATANO
	Morocco	Mr. BENJELLOUN-TOUIMI
	New Zealand	Mr. KEATING
	Pakistan	Mr. KHAN
	Russian Federation	Mr. VORONTSOV
	Spain	Mr. PEDAUYE
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. RICHARDSON
	Venezuela	Mr. ARRIA

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The meeting was called to order at 4.40 p.m.

ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

The agenda was adopted.

THE SITUATION IN LIBERIA

FURTHER REPORT OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL ON LIBERIA (S/26200)

The PRESIDENT: I should like to inform the Council that I have received letters from the representatives of Benin, Egypt, Liberia and Nigeria, in which they request to be invited to participate in the discussion of the item on the Council's agenda. In accordance with the usual practice, I propose, with the consent of the Council, to invite those representatives to participate in the discussion without the right to vote, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Charter and rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

At the invitation of the President, Mr. Matthews (Liberia) took a place at the Council table; Mr. Whannou (Benin), Mrs. Hassan (Egypt) and Mr. Gambari (Nigeria) took the places reserved for them at the side of the Council Chamber.

The PRESIDENT: The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

The Security Council is meeting in accordance with the understanding reached in its prior consultations.

Members of the Council have before them the further report of the Secretary-General on Liberia, document S/26200. Members of the Council also have before them document S/26259, which contains the text of the draft resolution prepared in the course of the Council's prior consultations.

(The President)

I should like to draw the attention of the members of the Council to document S/26265, which contains the text of a letter dated 4 August 1993 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Security Council. Members of the Council have also received photocopies of a letter dated 6 August 1993 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of Benin to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General, which will be issued as document S/26272.

The first speaker is the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Interim Government of National Unity of Liberia, His Excellency Mr. Gabriel Baccus Matthews. On behalf of the Council, I welcome him and invite him to make his statement.

Mr. MATTHEWS (Liberia): The delegation of Liberia is particularly pleased to see you, Ambassador Albright, serve as President of the Security Council at a time when the Secretary-General's report on Liberia, document S/26200 of 4 August 1993, is being considered by the Council.

My delegation congratulates Ambassador David Hannay, Permanent Representative of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, on his effective leadership of the Council during the preceding month.

As the Secretary-General has informed the Council, the Cotonou Agreement was signed by the Interim Government of National Unity, the National Patriotic Front of Liberia and the United Liberation Movement for Democracy on 25 July 1993. The Agreement represents a significant breakthrough in the quest for durable peace in Liberia.

After more than 24 meetings in the search for a negotiated settlement, the Cotonou Agreement is a victory for the Liberian people, derived from patience and perseverance. By agreeing on a process beginning with the

(Mr. Matthews, Liberia)

cessation of hostilities and leading to disarmament and free and fair elections, we Liberians have decided how political change will be brought about in our country.

The Agreement is also a victory for the leaders and peoples of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), who took a bold initiative to resolve a security question in the subregion, with the active support and cooperation of the Organization of African Unity (OAU).

The United Nations must also share in this victory. Therefore, we wish to express thanks to the Secretary-General for his previous reports, and we register our appreciation to the Security Council for resolutions 788 (1992) and 813 (1993), which helped to create the enabling conditions that made the Cotonou Agreement possible. Indeed, the successful implementation of the Cotonou Agreement will herald a new chapter in the international cooperation for peace between the United Nations and a regional and a subregional organization - the OAU and ECOWAS, respectively.

(Mr. Matthews, Liberia)

We are pleased to inform members of the Council that since the signing of the Cotonou Agreement all of the parties are acting in a manner that is most constructive. The guns are silent; the cease-fire is being fully observed.

It is important to note that the parties are taking the steps decided upon by which they would, together, transform themselves, through a welcome metamorphosis, into a Liberian National Transitional Government. For a change, things are beginning to look bright on the Liberian side, and there is now cause for optimism.

The adoption of the draft resolution before the Council today, and its implementation, will prove a significant milestone on the road to peace. The establishment of a United Nations Observer Mission in Liberia (UNOMIL), as envisaged by the Peace Agreement, constitutes an important confidence-building measure in an effort to end this war among brothers. We wish to associate all Liberians with the draft resolution before the Council, and we commend it for unanimous adoption.

Another crucial concern at this time is whether the United Nations will find it possible to help us in our resolve to have the Transitional Government installed within the next 30 days, concomitant, as the Agreement requires, with the beginning of a process of comprehensive disarmament of combatants.

It will be observed, from the Secretary-General's report (S/26200), that there is an allusion to a request from ECOWAS for funds to enable some African countries to provide reinforcement for the ECOWAS Cease-fire Monitoring Group (ECOMOG). These additional troops, together with the United Nations observers, are urgently needed for the commencement of the disarmament process.

We appeal to the Council to give timely consideration to this request from ECOWAS so that those countries which have declared, in principle, a

(Mr. Matthews, Liberia)

willingness to commit their troops can secure the funding which will facilitate their deployment.

The peace process in Liberia is at a delicate stage. For three and a half years, war, death and desolation were visited upon the Liberian people. Today peace is within our reach, and every effort should be exerted to have the Cotonou Agreement implemented free from the threatening effect of delays. We therefore appeal to all members of the Council to lend us their empathy and support to help the people of Liberia, who, with one accord, are now ready and willing to march together to a peaceful and democratic future.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Interim Government of National Unity of Liberia for the kind words he addressed to me.

The next speaker is the representative of Benin. I invite him to take a place at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. WHANNOU (Benin) (interpretation from French): On behalf of the President of the Republic of Benin, His Excellency Mr. Nicéphore Soglo, current President of the Conference of Heads of State and Government of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), I take the floor before this body on the occasion of its consideration of the item concerning the situation in Liberia.

At the outset, Madam President, allow me to congratulate you most warmly on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for August. Your thorough knowledge and mastery of international issues assure us of the success of the Council's deliberations at a time when, with the disappearance of global antagonisms, local or regional conflicts constitute serious threats to the peace and security of the world.

(Mr. Whannou, Benin)

Your predecessor, the Permanent Representative of the United Kingdom, has our greatest admiration for his efficient management of the business of the Council last month.

The Security Council's consideration once again today of the situation in Liberia follows the signing in Cotonou on 25 July 1993 of the Peace Agreement between the Liberian parties, who have thus reaffirmed their commitment to respect the Yamoussoukro IV Accord and without delay to carry out the various provisions in accordance with the agreed timetable.

President Nicéphore Soglo is especially grateful to the Council as a whole for the diligence it has shown in dealing with the Liberian conflict.

The signing of the Peace Agreement in Cotonou was made possible by the will of the parties to the Liberian conflict to silence the guns at last and to embark upon a process of peaceful settlement with a view to a just and lasting solution to their internal dispute.

But I wish here to stress that the role of the United Nations has been decisive in introducing a climate of confidence between the parties without which we would not be speaking today of the Cotonou Agreement, which opens up the way to implementing the various important provisions of the overall Yamoussoukro IV peace Accord, namely: respect for the cease-fire; regrouping and disarming of troops and then their demobilization; and holding of general and presidential elections. For the immediate future, the implementation of this Agreement will encourage not only the expediting and distribution of humanitarian assistance to the Liberian population, so sorely tried by a conflict dating back to 1989, but also the return of the displaced peoples, in order to strengthen the social bases for the political settlement.

(Mr. Whannou, Benin)

We must pay a tribute to the Secretary-General and, through him, to his Special Representative for Liberia for having carried out the directives of the Council concerning the situation in Liberia.

The praiseworthy efforts of the international community to alleviate the suffering of thousands of innocent victims of this conflict also deserve our great appreciation. The Cotonou Peace Agreement confirms the important role that has fallen to the United Nations in the peace process in Liberia. The idea is to strengthen confidence between the parties to the conflict. The draft resolution whose adoption will confirm the Council's present deliberations falls within that context. It deals with the provisions to be adopted for the creation of the United Nations Observer Mission in Liberia (UNOMIL) and the involvement of the United Nations in monitoring the cease-fire. We must welcome these important measures by the Council.

On behalf of the current President of the Economic Community of African States (ECOWAS), I wish to assure the Council once again that our subregional organization will cooperate fully with the United Nations in the fulfilment of its mission in Liberia.

The civil war in Liberia hampered the achievement of the integration - especially economic - of ECOWAS, an undertaking that should contribute to the implementation of the programme for the economic and social recovery of the African continent. The restoration of peace, security and stability in Liberia is thus one of our priorities.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of Benin for the kind words he addressed to me.

The next speaker is the representative of Nigeria. I invite him to take a place at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. GAMBARI (Nigeria): Permit me, Madam President, to join the preceding speakers and to extend my delegation's warmest congratulations on your assumption of the office of President of this esteemed Council for the month of August. I have no doubt that with your rich diplomatic experience and under your very able guidance the Council will be able to discharge effectively its responsibilities in the matters of which it will be seized this month.

My delegation also wishes to congratulate warmly our indefatigable Secretary-General on his lucid and comprehensive report (S/26200) of 4 August 1993 on the situation in Liberia. The indomitable and valiant efforts of his Special Representative, Mr. Gordon-Somers, in the search for lasting peace in the troubled West African State also deserve our highest commendation.

Nigeria welcomes the outcome of the two meetings which were held, respectively, in Geneva and Cotonou in the month of July as a follow-up to the mandate given to the Secretary-General under Security Council resolution 813 (1993). The Geneva meeting, held at the instance of the Secretary-General and attended by, inter alia, the Chairman of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the Secretary-General of the Organization of African Unity (OAU), set up the framework for the latest Agreement between the parties to the Liberian conflict, subsequently reached in Cotonou on 25 July 1993. It is my delegation's considered opinion that not since Yamoussoukro IV has there been any settlement as comprehensive as the Cotonou Agreement, nor one so crucial to the search for final peace in Liberia.

Nigeria is indeed proud to be associated with the peace process at all its stages, a process which now appears to be bearing fruit in Liberia. Along with sister countries in West Africa, Nigeria provided leadership in

(Mr. Gambari, Nigeria)

peace-making and peace-keeping in Liberia, especially at a time when some other Powers feared to tread on the very dangerous grounds of the war-torn country. It is therefore the view of the Nigerian Government that perhaps we have earned the right to call upon all parties having an interest in Liberia, including the members of the international community, to support this latest Agreement so as to achieve the desired results.

The draft resolution under the Council's consideration commends itself for unanimous adoption. It represents a significant step in the efforts to achieve a peaceful and speedy resolution of the conflict which has persisted in the West African State for several years. My delegation is pleased that the present draft resolution seeks, albeit implicitly, the implementation in a most effective manner of the provisions of the Yamoussoukro Accord, which the countries of West Africa and the parties to the conflict in Liberia have long acknowledged as the best possible basis for creating lasting peace in that country. We believe that, as recommended in the present draft resolution, the setting up of a Joint Cease-fire Monitoring Committee, to be replaced subsequently by a United Nations Observer Mission in Liberia (UNOMIL), would go a long way in strengthening the peace process, to which the States of the subregion have an abiding commitment.

Despite the signing of the Cotonou Agreement by all the relevant parties to the conflict in Liberia, we have no illusions that peace has finally dawned in that country. Not discounting the possibility of a breach of the Cotonou Agreement by one of the parties, we believe that the international community must continue to exert itself to the utmost until peace is fully assured in the country. With the active cooperation lately demonstrated between the United Nations and the African regional organizations, especially the Economic Community of West African States and the Organization of African Unity, it has

(Mr. Gambari, Nigeria)

been possible now, more than ever before, to maintain close contact with all the parties involved in the Liberian crisis. In this circumstance, and combined with the political will and determnination of the Liberian people and the member States of the Economic Community of West African States, we can hope with confidence that the end of the Liberian crisis may well be very near.

Finally, while the efforts to achieve peace in Liberia continue, we avail ourselves of this opportunity to renew our appeal to the international community and the relevant aid agencies not to relent in their efforts to deliver humanitarian assistance to the needy and displaced people in Liberia, who have suffered and continue to suffer from the ravages of the civil war. The international community has a duty to continue to help these people rebuild their lives in peace and dignity.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of Nigeria for his kind words addressed to me.

It is my understanding that the Council is ready to proceed to the vote on the draft resolution before it. Unless I hear any objection, I shall take it that that is the case.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

I shall first call on those members of the Council who wish to make statements before the voting.

Mr. OLHAYE (Djibouti): My delegation attaches great significance to the draft resolution before us, which bears upon the long-suffering nation of Liberia. We support wholeheartedly the dispatch team of 30 military observers called for, signalling the inception of formal United Nations involvement in the resolution of that bloody and tragic conflict. The Cotonou Peace Agreement of last month has to be considered a watershed in the long and

(Mr. Olhaye, Djibouti)

painful efforts of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) to bring about peace in Liberia, on which it must be sincerely congratulated. This has been essentially an African and, more specifically, a West African, achievement, financed, directed and manned by the countries of that region. Determined and persistent leadership has forced the combatants to the peace table, with the result that there is today a cease-fire, a plan to disarm and demobilize. Most of all, though, there is unity on the continuation of Liberia as a unified country. In this respect we vigorously laud the untiring efforts of the Secretary-General and his extremely competent and energetic Special Representative, Mr. Trevor Gordon-Somers, who achieved this breakthrough after several months of patient negotiations.

But we must remain realistic and alert and move with the utmost speed to capitalize on this opening. Wars and hostilities always engender a certain amount of distrust and suspicion, which needs to be overcome if peace is to last. Such feelings have been visible in this conflict, even extending to provisions of the Agreement. The presence of the United Nations in Liberia will therefore serve to give all the parties acutely needed assurance of the interest of the international community in the conflict and its willingness to become involved in seeking a fair and equitable resolution. But, very rightly, the Agreement is framed as a cooperative exercise by ECOWAS, the ECOWAS Cease-fire Monitoring Group (ECOMOG) and the United Nations, mirroring the complementary role each has played thus far under the lead of ECOWAS. It will serve as a shining example of regional and international division of labour in the maintenance of international peace and security.

We must always remain mindful that this war has exacted a terrible toll on the Liberian people and that, in addition to establishing peace, every effort needs to be made to increase quickly the flow of humanitarian

(Mr. Olhaye, Djibouti)

assistance. Conditions must also be established that will allow the thousands of refugees and displaced people to return to their homes. This will not effectively take place until there is a lifting of the tight economic sanctions imposed by ECOWAS. For that to happen, the United Nations Observer Mission needs to be in place and the cease-fire and disarmament process begun without obstruction. Clearly, there is every incentive to move quickly.

In this respect, we welcome the further enlargement of ECOMOG by drawing on new troops from ECOWAS countries and other OAU countries outside the West African region. The United Nations observer force, we believe, will provide the critically needed credibility and transparency, not only in cease-fire verification but also in the implementation of the encampment, disarmament and demobilization provisions of the Agreement.

(Mr. Olhaye, Djibouti)

While ECOWAS and the United Nations have been instrumental in bringing the warring parties to the table, neither the United Nations nor ECOWAS has imposed a set of agreements on the parties. This plan is a product of the Liberians themselves, reflecting, we hope, their earnest desire to halt the fighting. It would be a cynical shame - a tragedy - if it were the intention of anyone to use this accord as a distraction to buy time to consolidate or re-equip. It is to be hoped that areas in the accord which have not been totally spelled out, such as the presidency, will not serve as excuses to reignite the conflict.

With the proposed electoral reform and the restructuring of the legislature and the judiciary, the necessary institutional base has been laid for a resumption of national government. By removing the weapons, demobilizing the troops and sealing the borders, Liberia could be in a position to begin preparation for voter registration, elections, and a truly representative government. The United Nations needs to be on hand to assist in this worthy venture, which will begin with 30 military observers and which may perhaps act as a pace-setter for an international effort to promote the reconstruction of Liberia.

Mr. BENJELLOUN-TOUIMI (Morocco) (interpretation from French): Madam President, on behalf of the delegation of my country, may I first express our satisfaction at seeing you preside over the Council this month. I am convinced that your great competence and personal qualities will ensure the success of our work. We assure you of our support and full cooperation.

I also take this opportunity to convey my warm congratulations to Ambassador David Hannay on the very effective manner in which he led our work last month.

(Mr. Benjelloun-Touimi, Morocco)

My delegation has studied closely the Secretary-General's excellent report on the situation in Liberia and can only welcome the positive developments which have occurred on the political scene of that fraternal country, especially the signing on 25 July last in Cotonou, under the auspices of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) of a peace Agreement among the parties to the conflict. We believe that this is a major achievement that will greatly contribute to normalizing the situation in a country that is still suffering the ravages of civil war and destruction.

The conclusion of this Agreement, which took place thanks to the tireless efforts of the Secretary-General's Special Representative, Mr. Gordon-Somers, and the ECOWAS countries, is a good example of sound cooperation between the United Nations and the regional organizations, as advocated in Chapter VIII of the Charter of our Organization.

My delegation is convinced that United Nations action along with that of the ECOWAS countries will contribute decisively to the implementation of the provisions of this Agreement by making it more credible.

We wish to note our great satisfaction at the approach adopted by the Secretary-General for the establishment of a peace-keeping mission in that fraternal country. First, a technical observation mission will be dispatched, and that will be followed by an initial team of 30 military observers for a limited period of three months, as provided for in the draft resolution before us.

Furthermore, we support the Secretary-General's decision to create a special trust fund for Liberia to furnish assistance to countries of the subregion that have made sacrifices, as well as other African countries that might be able to supply reinforcements to the ECOWAS Cease-fire Monitoring Group (ECOMOG).

(Mr. Benjelloun-Touimi, Morocco)

We look forward with interest and optimism to the Secretary-General's next report, which will no doubt include recommendations on the mandate, the scope and the cost of the envisaged United Nations Observer Mission in Liberia, as well as on the manner in which coordination will be ensured between that Mission and the peace-keeping forces of the countries of the subregion.

In view of the foregoing, my delegation will vote in favour of the draft resolution before us because we believe that it reflects the contents of the Secretary-General's report and consequently covers our overall concerns with regard to this African issue, to which my country attaches great importance.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of Morocco for his kind words addressed to me.

Mr. ARRIA (Venezuela) (interpretation from Spanish): Madam President, my delegation is especially pleased to see you presiding over the Council this month. You come here after a long and outstanding career in scholarly research and in the training of the human resources of your own country in the field of international relations. You enjoy very-well-deserved prestige for all this.

On two previous occasions I have been in the Council under the presidency of Ambassador Hannay of the United Kingdom. I join in the remarks of recognition expressed by my colleagues of the extraordinary competence and dedication of Ambassador Hannay, aided by his very highly qualified delegation.

On 1 August a cease-fire entered into force, pursuant to the 25 July Cotonou Agreement. The untrammelled violence that had reigned for three years, since the invasion by Charles Taylor of the Nimba area from Côte d'Ivoire to overthrow Samuel Doe, has already cost the lives of over

(Mr. Arria, Venezuela)

150,000 people and driven almost another million people from their homes. There can be no doubt about the remarkable role that has been played in this mediation by the Secretary-General and his Special Representative, Mr. Trevor Gordon-Somers, to whom my delegation expresses its appreciation. Only time will demonstrate the true willingness of the parties - especially the National Patriotic Front of Liberia - to comply with the Agreement.

As has been indicated by the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Interim Government of National Unity of Liberia, Mr. Baccus Matthews, Cotonou represents a victory by his people, a victory of their perseverance in seeking peace, a victory by his people in shouldering the responsibility for the political restructuring of their country. It is no doubt an agreement that the parties have imposed upon themselves, and that, in large measure, is its great value.

Cotonou provides for the holding of elections in the first half of 1994 and for almost immediate disarmament by the parties. The experience of Angola in this respect must be borne very much in mind. Mr. Savimbi saw the electoral process in Angola as a mere ritual to confirm his leadership. When it did not turn out that way, he disregarded the process - with the consequences of which we are all aware. The leader of the National Patriotic Front of Liberia (NPFL) has given similar indications.

The Agreement also provides that the parties to the conflict will constitute an electoral council initially composed of five members and a legislative assembly of 37 members. It will fall to these organs to conduct the initial transition process, which of course will be a long and difficult one of reconciliation and national reunification that will require, as the Liberian Minister for Foreign Affairs has very well pointed out, the

(Mr. Arria, Venezuela)

cooperation of the parties and the support and vigilant assistance of the international community.

Accordingly, my delegation hopes that the Cotonou Agreement can be implemented even within the very strict timetable that has been set - most especially for the holding of elections, which should not represent the end of Liberia's national reconstruction process

The report of the Secretary-General's Special Representative, Mr. Gordon-Somers, emphasizes the urgency of involving the various levels of Liberian society - adults, women, community leaders - as an essential step in the process of reunification and national reconciliation. This aspect is of crucial importance, as is shown by the present situation in Somalia. In Liberia the situation is even more promising: there are independent newspapers, human rights centres, groups for the protection of children, and so forth, in operation.

In the context of national reconciliation, I believe it is worth recalling that violations of human rights should not be disregarded in the process of the normalization of that long- suffering country. Impunity has only encouraged, and will only encourage, the continued perpetration of crimes. The massacre of 600 refugee women and children in St. Peter's Church in Monrovia, the murder of five American nuns - so reminiscent of the murder of American Jesuit priests and nuns in El Salvador - the use of armed brigades of children by the NPFL: all this adds a monstrous dimension to the violence suffered by the people of Liberia during a period which has been described as one of anarchy and national suicide, and which I myself once defined as a fratricidal low-intensity war, but a war of very high mortality.

(Mr. Arria, Venezuela)

My delegation wishes once again to express its appreciation for the involvement of the Economic Community of West African States, which very boldly three years ago sent a military contingent, which made possible the establishment of an Interim Government in Monrovia, presided over by Professor Sawyer.

There can be no doubt that the intensity and complexity of the conflict gave rise to a series of actions which went beyond the original ECOMOG mandate. The question, however, is what would have happened if ECOMOG had not agreed to this intervention, especially since the United Nations itself began to play a political role in the conflict only in November 1992, almost three years after it began.

Africa Watch has rightly emphasized that experience with the Commission on the Truth in El Salvador shows it to be a mechanism that can be adapted to Liberia. Although the experiences of one region, where circumstances are different, are not necessarily applicable to another, I would point out that the mechanisms adopted in El Salvador could provide a valuable precedent, especially bearing in mind their moral and ethical value.

The documentation of violations must have a purpose, as the Chairman of the Commission on the Truth, former President Belisario Betancourt of Colombia, pointed out when he said:

> "Peace is always signed by those who made war, and all former combatants have set up forums for reconciliation in the new society. Each party is called upon to carry out the task dictated to it by its pain and by its love of country... A new nation rises from the ashes of a war in which everyone was unjust. They are watched by the fallen, from above, and by those who still hope."

The PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of Venezuela for the kind words he addressed to me.

Mr. LI Zhaoxing (China) (interpretation from Chinese): It gives me great pleasure to join my colleagues in welcoming the Foreign Minister of Liberia, who has come all the way to attend today's meeting. He has brought to us the voice of the African people and the aspirations of the Liberian people for peace and stability, for national reconstruction and economic development.

The Chinese delegation is also very grateful for the important statements made by the delegations of Benin and Nigeria.

The signing of the Peace Agreement in Cotonou has given us hope that we have seen the end of the three-and-a-half-year civil war in Liberia. It is also a major contribution to the restoration of peace and stability in Liberia and in the sub-region of western Africa. The Chinese delegation is very pleased to see this important development. We are aware that the establishment of the cease-fire in Liberia, achieved with the help of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the Organization of African Unity (OAU), and the beginning of the implementation of the Peace Agreement undoubtedly marked a good beginning in the peace process.

"Well begun is half done". Success in the peace process and the achievement of a genuine and lasting peace in Liberia depend essentially on all the parties to the conflict cooperating with the United Nations and ECOWAS, adopting practical and effective measures to fulfil their commitments and strictly observing the Peace Agreement and relevant Security Council resolutions so as to ensure a successful general election, thereby creating conditions for an early national reconciliation.

(Mr. Li Zhaoxing, China)

On the basis of those considerations, the Chinese delegation will vote in favour of the draft resolution. We hope that the Secretary-General will send the advance group of 30 military observers as soon as possible in order to facilitate the efforts of ECOWAS to achieve a political settlement.

Endowed with rich natural resources, the African continent, with its industrious people, has great potential. The African people, having suffered so long from conflicts and wars, are striving to establish a peaceful environment, rebuild their homelands and develop their national economies. The Chinese Government and people will, as always, support the African people in their cause - the pursuit of peace and development. We sincerely hope that, with the help of the international community and through their own efforts, the African people will overcome their difficulties, strengthen their unity and cooperation and settle various disputes, so that they may set out on the road to national stability and economic development at an early date. We believe that the solution to the Liberian conflict will surely promote peace and stability in that subregion and the African continent as a whole.

Mr. JESUS (Cape Verde): It gives my delegation great pleasure to see the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Liberia here today. We are also happy to see you, Madam President, presiding over the Council this month. We wish you success and pledge our full cooperation. We would also like to congratulate your predecessor, Ambassador Hannay of the United Kingdom, on the outstanding leadership he provided the Council last month.

The conflict in Liberia has been a major concern for the countries of the sub-region and has caused thousands of deaths, destroyed the economy of the country and spawned a serious humanitarian and refugee situation.

The time has come for all those involved to work seriously and decisively towards achieving peace and stability in the country.

(Mr. Jesus, Cape Verde)

In this context, we welcome the Cotonou Peace Agreement as a turning point in the process of finding a lasting peaceful solution to the conflict. The Cotonou Agreement is the end result of a protracted effort by the international community to bring peace to Liberia, in which the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) played and continues to play a pivotal role.

We are particularly gratified by the action of the Council that has created the conditions for meaningful United Nations assistance, leading to the achievement of a negotiated solution to the Liberian conflict. In this regard, we concur with the Secretary-General that the future role of the United Nations, while continuing to be supportive in nature, is nevertheless crucial to the effective implementation of the Liberian Peace Agreement.

The report of the Secretary-General in this respect is welcome and encouraging. The proposed United Nations Observer Mission in Liberia seems to be a sine qua non condition for the successful implementation of the Cotonou Agreement. We hope that the United Nations Observer Mission in Liberia (UNOMIL) will be deployed in a timely manner. We value particularly the despatch to Liberia as soon as possible of an advance team of 30 military observers to participate in the work of the Joint Cease-fire Monitoring Committee.

Mention is also made in the report of the Secretary-General of the request for the setting up of a trust fund to assist the ECOWAS Cease-fire Monitoring Group (ECOMOG) contributing countries and potential contributing countries to cope with expenses resulting from their peace-keeping role. We encourage the Secretary-General to set up such a fund, and we urge all those in a position to do so to make their contributions.

(Mr. Jesus, Cape Verde)

We are concerned with the humanitarian situation in Liberia. Every effort should be made to guarantee the internationally recognized right of access to humanitarian assistance of all those in need.

Finally, we pay tribute to the untiring efforts of ECOWAS to promote peace in Liberia. Likewise, we express our gratitude to the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Liberia, Mr. Gordon-Somers, for his dedication and commitment and also to congratulate him on his successful handling of the negotiations that led to the Cotonou Agreement.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of Cape Verde for his kind words addressed to me.

I now put to the vote the draft resolution in document S/26259.

A vote was taken by show of hands.

In favour: Brazil, Cape Verde, China, Djibouti, France, Hungary, Japan, Morocco, New Zealand, Pakistan, Russian Federation, Spain, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America, Venezuela

The PRESIDENT: There were 15 votes in favour. The draft resolution has therefore been adopted unanimously as resolution 856 (1993).

I shall now call on those members of the Council who wish to make statements following the voting.

Mr. RICHARDSON (United Kingdom): First and foremost, I want to welcome warmly the presence in our midst today of the Foreign Minister of Liberia. I thank him for his dignified statement. I share his view that the Cotonou Agreement represents a victory for the Liberian people, and I also share his hope that the present resolution may prove a milestone on the road to peace.

The United Kingdom warmly welcomes the agreement reached at Cotonou on 25 July. The resolution which we have just adopted is a testimony to the efforts of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) to resolve a conflict which has claimed some 150,000 lives and which has wrought terrible damage on Liberia and brought instability to its neighbours, such as Sierra Leone. We congratulate in particular the Secretary-General's Special Representative, Mr. Trevor Gordon-Somers, President Soglo of Benin and Mr. Canaan Banana of the Organization of African Unity (OAU). This agreement

(Mr. Richardson, United Kingdom)

is an excellent example of cooperation between the United Nations, the OAU and ECOWAS.

We recall, however, that previous agreements have failed to last. The new ingredients introduced this time are a clear determination of the parties to the conflict to end the tragedy inside Liberia and the willingness of the international community to provide active support for the peace process.

The signing of the Cotonou Agreement is only the beginning, not the end, of that peace process. It is essential that all parties should seize this opportunity for peace and cooperate fully in the implementation of the Agreement. We must not let pass this opportunity to bring the conflict to a close.

As a first step, it is vital that the cease-fire should hold. We were therefore pleased to support the dispatch of an advance group of 30 military observers for the Cease-fire commission.

For this process to move further forward and proceed to elections and a new government, it is evident that the ECOWAS regional force, the ECOWAS Cease-fire Monitoring Group (ECOMOG), will have a continued crucial role in maintaining internal security. We strongly support the efforts ECOMOG has made so far in very difficult circumstances. The proposals put forward at Cotonou to widen the circle of contributors and to supplement ECOMOG with United Nations observers are a valuable opportunity to build confidence. We look forward to a report from the Secretary-General on how the United Nations Observer Mission in Liberia (UNOMIL) might best be deployed.

The ending of this conflict will reveal the full extent of the damage caused to Liberia. But it is already clear that the need for humanitarian relief and, in the longer term, for reconstruction will be considerable.

(Mr. Richardson, United Kingdom)

My Government will continue to provide humanitarian relief - since 1990, we have already provided 8.8 million pounds both bilaterally and via the European Community - and we look forward to consulting with our European Community partners on Liberia's other needs. We hope that as many States as possible will be able to look positively at the case for support.

Mr. MERIMEE (France) (interpretation from French): My delegation welcomed the signing of the Cotonou Agreement, which put an end to a deadly conflict. We pay a tribute to the efforts made by the Representative of the Secretary-General, by the OAU and by ECOWAS to foster the process of a peaceful settlement. France now calls upon all the parties to comply fully with the commitments they have entered into.

This is one of the first times that the United Nations, in the spirit of Chapter VIII of the Charter, has undertaken a peace-keeping operation in cooperation with a regional organization, and we can only welcome this. France will therefore watch especially carefully the way in which this operation is conducted, and, in particular, the coordination between UNOMIL and the ECOWAS forces contributing to the operation. We should see to it, for this first experiment, that the competences and prerogatives of the two organizations are strictly respected, it being understood that the United Nations must maintain its precedence. This clearly defined sharing of responsibilities should also apply to the area of funding, where confusion should be avoided. United Nations activities should be funded through mandatory contributions, whereas ECOMOG activities should be financed through the special trust fund, contributions to which will be voluntary. France will study the Secretary-General's report in this regard with special attention.

(Mr. Merimée, France)

France is, furthermore, concerned about the difficulties related to the provision of humanitarian assistance to Liberia, and especially about the fact that sizeable convoys are now being held back on the border between Côte d'Ivoire and Liberia, in spite of requests by the International Committee of the Red Cross. France attaches the greatest importance to the immediate reopening of these borders so that humanitarian assistance can be provided, along with the establishment of an appropriate monitoring system to ensure that these convoys are indeed humanitarian in nature.

Finally, while we welcome the prospect of a rapid deployment of United Nations observers to contribute to a settlement of the conflict in Liberia, we hope that the United Nations will demonstrate equal rapidity in contributing to the settlement of another, no less deadly, conflict - that of Rwanda.

Mr. SARDENBERG (Brazil): The delegation of Brazil joined the consensus on resolution 856 (1993), concerning the situation in Liberia. Brazil is following with concern the plight of Liberia, our neighbour on the opposite shore of the Atlantic and a fellow member of the Zone of Peace and Cooperation of the South Atlantic. We believe the signing of the Cotonou peace Agreement constitutes a major achievement, one that strengthens our hopes for the complete end of the tragic civil strife afflicting that country and, indeed, for the restoration of peace and security in that part of West Africa.

We are encouraged by the fact that the strenuous efforts made both by the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Trevor Gordon-Somers, have met with a commitment by the warring factions to reach a settlement conducive to national conciliation and to the reconstruction of Liberia. In this connection, we share the view already expressed in the course of this meeting

(Mr. Sardenberg, Brazil)

that the international community should cooperate with the humanitarian assistance efforts to be carried out by the United Nations and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), with a view to creating better conditions for the smooth implementation of the peace agreement. We support, therefore, the appeal in this respect which was made today by the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Liberia, Mr. Baccus Matthews.

My delegation commends, in particular, the Economic Community of West African States for the untiring efforts it has been exerting under extremely difficult conditions towards the restoration of peace and stability in Liberia. Our appreciation is also extended to the Organization of African Unity for the support given to the peace process by that regional organization.

We look forward to receiving and considering the report of the Secretary-General on the proposed establishment of the United Nations Observer Mission in Liberia (UNOMIL), in particular the guidelines for the future cooperation between ECOWAS and the proposed United Nations operations in Liberia. By ensuring greater efficiency in the implementaton of the Cotonou peace Agreement, such cooperation will serve as an example for future undertakings between the United Nations and other regional organizations, in accordance with Chapter VIII of the Charter.

We note that resolution 856 (1993) calls upon the parties to ensure the safety of United Nations and other personnel deployed in the field. The resolution also encourages the early signing of a status of mission agreement, thus avoiding undue delays in the deployment of the mission.

Although it recognizes the great difficulties Liberia still faces, Brazil is confident that the settlement process is on the right path, and that the Liberian people will finally be allowed to enjoy the peace, security and stability they deserve.

Mr. VORONTSOV (Russian Federation) (interpretation from Russian): Madam President, I should like first to say that we are glad to welcome you as President of the Security Council. We have already seen with great satisfaction that the helm of our ship is steady under your leadership. We are convinced that you will steer this ship safely through the storm of international politics. We are also grateful to your predecessor, Ambassador David Hannay, for his outstanding leadership of the Council in July.

The Russian delegation would also like to welcome the presence today of the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Liberia. We listened with great attention to his important statement.

Russia welcomed the signing on 25 July this year in Cotonou of an Agreement that we believe really makes it possible to establish peace in Liberia and for refugees to return to their homeland. As we see it, it is now extremely important that all parties to the Agreement adhere strictly to the obligations they have entered into and not make any attempts to torpedo the peace-keeping process.

Russia has consistently advoc ed and continues to advocate - including in the Security Council - a solution to the Liberian problem on a regional basis. In this connection, we feel it to be significant that the Peace Agreement has been achieved under the aegis of a regional organization - the Economic Community of West African States - and we would like to congratulate that organization. There has thus been established a positive precedent for seeking ways to solve military conflicts and crises on the African continent within the framework of African efforts.

The experience of settling many crisis situations, including those in Africa, has convincingly shown that the only real and effective way is that of political dialogue and of mutual compromise.

(Mr. Vorontsov, Russian Federation)

The Russian delegation voted in favour of the resolution, since it is aimed at promoting a settlement to the conflict and at effectively ensuring compliance by the parties with the conditions for a cease-fire. The Russian Federation is prepared in future to support the activities of African States aimed at finding ways to settle military conflicts and crisis situations on that continent within the context of regional efforts.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of the Russian Federation for the kind words he addressed to me.

Mr. HATANO (Japan): I wish to say, first of all, that my delegation is happy to see the Foreign Minister of Liberia participating in our discussion today.

Japan welcomes the Cotonou Peace Agreement. It is an important step towards the restoration of peace and security in Liberia, and I pay high tribute to the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the Organization of African Unity, the Secretary-General and his Special Representative, Mr. Gordon-Somers, for their efforts to restore peace in Liberia.

I am pleased to note that the cease-fire has generally held. In order to capitalize on this situation, it is important that an advance team of military observers be dispatched to Liberia as soon as possible.

We concur with the Secretary-General's view that ECOWAS or the ECOWAS Cease-Fire Monitoring Group will continue to play a central role in the implementation of the Cotonou Peace Agreement, with the United Nations playing a supporting role, and I stress the importance of ensuring close coordination between the United Nations and ECOWAS.

(Mr. Hatano, Japan)

In the meantime, the rapid and unimpeded expansion of humanitarian assistance activities throughout the country is of the utmost importance. Responding to this need, my Government decided last month to make a financial contribution to the assistance programme for Liberian refugees. It did so in the belief that such assistance is essential, not only to relieve the suffering of masses of people, but also to establish conditions that will be conducive to the successful implementation of the Cotonou peace Agreement.

Mr. PEDAUYE (Spain) (interpretation from Spanish): My delegation welcomes the presence in our midst of the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Liberia, to whom we extend a cordial greeting.

The Government of Spain has studied carefully the report of the Secretary-General on the situation in Liberia (S/26200). We are pleased to note the signing, which we welcome, of the Cotonou Agreement of 25 July 1993, which holds out the hope of putting an end to the long and terrible fratricidal war that besets that African State.

Liberia continues to provide an example of cooperation between the United Nations and a regional organization - in this case, the Economic Community of West African States - in conformity with the provisions of Chapter VIII of the Charter. We are also encouraged to learn that the Organization of African Unity is participating in, and providing valuable support for, the quest for peace in that country.

My delegation welcomes the decision of the Secretary-General to send to Liberia a technical team to deal with the establishment of a possible United Nations observer mission in that African country. We agree with the dispatch to Liberia of 30 military observers to cooperate in the observation and investigation of cease-fire violations.

(Mr. Pedauye, Spain)

It is also very timely, we feel, for the Secretary-General to issue an inter-agency appeal with a view to providing support for humanitarian assistance activities essential to establishing conditions leading to satisfactory implementation of the Peace Agreement. For all these reasons, my delegation voted in favour of the resolution that we have just adopted.

The Council should continue vigilantly to watch the course of events in Liberia, because, as the Secretary-General points out, we should not underestimate the difficulties that may arise in the future. We trust that such difficulties will not arise, but if they do the Council should take appropriate steps to overcome them and to ensure that the Liberian people's desire for peace is not thwarted.

Spain appeals to all the parties to respect the obligations that they have undertaken in the Peace Agreement. We are prepared, as a member of the Security Council, to continue cooperating to ensure the complete success of the peace process begun in Cotonou.

The PRESIDENT: I shall now make a statement in my capacity as the representative of the United States.

(The President)

I should like to welcome the Foreign Minister of Liberia to our midst and thank him for his very moving and realistic statement.

My Government welcomes the Council's decision to dispatch an advance team of monitors to Liberia to participate in the monitoring of the cease-fire. We note that the cease-fire took effect on 1 August, and accordingly urge that the advance team be sent as quickly as possible to reinforce the cease-fire and increase the confidence of the Liberian parties in the international monitoring effort.

At the same time, we appeal to the Liberian parties, and especially to the NPFL, to honour the commitment they made in the 25 July Agreement to allow humanitarian relief to be delivered to all areas of Liberia via the most direct route, including from Monrovia. According to international relief organizations, delays in the delivery of much-needed relief put thousands of displaced persons, especially in lower Bong county, at risk of starvation.

In view of the deteriorating humanitarian situation in the interior of the country, we also urge the United Nations to find on an urgent basis some mechanism to allow cross-border relief shipments from Côte d'Ivoire and Guinea to resume, until such time as the full observer contingent referred to in the Peace Agreement might arrive.

In carrying out its proposed mission, the prospective United Nations Observer Mission in Liberia would work closely with peace-keeping forces of the ECOWAS Cease-fire Monitoring Group (ECOMOG). The United States notes that the Secretary-General's report mentions a request from the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) for the establishment of a United Nations trust fund in support of the expanded ECOMOG peace-keeping force needed to implement the Peace Agreement. It is clear that the ECOWAS States will

(The President)

require substantial outside assistance to deploy additional peace-keeping forces. We encourage the Secretary-General to seriously consider setting up such a trust fund to facilitate the collection of international contributions to the ECOWAS/ECOMOG peace-keeping effort.

The United States has provided over $28 million to ECOWAS and its member States in the last three years in support of the ECOMOG peace-keeping operation in Liberia. We snall continue to assist ECOMOG as it steps up its activities to implement the 25 July peace Agreement, and encourage other members of the international community to do so as well.

The 25 July peace Agreement holds the promise of finally bringing the long-standing and destructive Liberian civil conflict to an end. While the support of the United Nations and the international community is crucial for implementing the Agreement, only the Liberian parties themselves can make it work and effect a transition to democracy. We appeal to the signatories to the Agreement to stand by the commitments made in the Cotonou Accord and to work with ECOWAS and the United Nations to implement the Agreement fairly and expeditiously so that the suffering of the Liberian people will end and reconciliation can begin.

I now resume my functions as President of the Council.

There are no further speakers on my list. The Security Council has thus concluded the present stage of its consideration of the item on its agenda.

The meeting rose at 5.50 p.m.